(In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.)

HELL & HEAVEN

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنُصَلِّيْ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ

HELL AND HEAVEN.

Hell is a natural sequence to our evil actions,[1] nay, it is a logical necessity; we need it, and cannot avoid it.[2] It has been created to meet the needs to which we will become alive as soon as we are resurrected. Hidden Truths, as I have said, will then become revealed. They will appear before our eyes,[3] and nothing will remain concealed.[4] Heaven and Hell will become manifest to us,[5] the former as the abode of bliss and happiness[6] and the latter as the place of affliction and chastisement,[7] the only place for that spiritual purification which will be our

[1] Surely you and what you worship besides Allah are the firewood of hell; to it you shall come. (21: 98).

[2] Then set *yourself* upright to the right *course* before there come from Allah the day which cannot be averted: on that day they shall become separated. (30: 43).

[3] Certainly *you were* heedless of it, but now We have removed from *you your* veil, so *your* sight today is sharp. (50: 22).

[4] On that day when hidden things shall be made manifest. (86: 9).

[5] And the garden shall be brought near for those who guard (against evil). (26: 90).

And the garden shall be brought near to those who guard (against evil), not far off: (50: 31).

[6] Does every man of them desire that he should be made to enter the garden of bliss? (70: 38).

[7] And whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle and goes beyond His limits, He will cause him to enter fire to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement.

And as for those who are guilty of an indecency from among your women, call to witness against them four (witnesses) from among you; then if they bear witness confine them to the houses until death takes them away or Allah opens some way for them.

And as for the two who are guilty of *indecency* from among you, give them both a slight punishment; then if they repent and amend, turn aside from them; surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

indispensable need. We shall not be able to return to earth [1] for our purification, though we may long and even pray for it, because we shall leave behind the material body, as it is necessary only for an earthly sojourn. Heaven, on the other hand, will not receive us in the condition in which we now find ourselves, since it is a place exclusively for purified souls. [2] Besides, if we be not purged of our earthly appetites then how can we live in regions which provide only spiritual food? Again, if Heaven is the place of light [3] how can we

Repentance with Allah is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn (to Allah) soon, so these it is to whom Allah turns (mercifully), and Allah is Ever-knowing, Wise.

And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: surely now I repent; nor (for) those who die while they are unbelievers. These are they for whom We have prepared a painful chastisement. (4: 14-18).

They shall have chastisement in this world's life, and the chastisement of the hereafter is certainly more grievous, and they shall have no protector against Allah. (13: 34).

(Into) hell? they shall enter into it, and an evil place it is to settle in. (14: 29).

And thus do We recompense him who is extravagant and does not believe in the communications of his Lord; and certainly the chastisement of the hereafter is severer and more lasting. (20: 127).

[1] And whomsoever Allah makes err, he has no guardian after Him; and *you shall* see the unjust, when they see the chastisement, saying: Is there any way to return. (42: 44).

[2] And it is said to those who guard (against evil): What is it that your Lord has revealed? They say, Good. For those who do good in this world is good, nd certainly the abode of the hereafter is better; and certainly most excellent is the abode of those who guard (against evil). (16: 30).

On that day *you will* see the faithful men and the faithful women—their light running before them and on their right hand—good news for you to-day: gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein, that is the grand achievement. (57: 12).

And We will remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their breasts; the rivers shall flow beneath them and they shall say: All praise is due to Allah Who guided us to this; and we would not have found the way had it not been that Allah had guided us; certainly the apostles of our Lord brought the truth; and it shall be cried out to them that this is the garden of which you are made heirs for what you did. (7: 43).

[3] On the day when the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women will say to those who believe: Wait for us, that we may have light from your light; it shall be said: Turn back and seek a light. Then separation would be brought about between them, with a wall having a door in it; (as for) the inside of it, there shall be mercy in it, and (as for) the outside of it, before it there shall be chastisement. (57: 13).

(Many) faces on that day shall be bright. (80: 38).

face it if we are of dark substance?[1] Heaven is also the place for the spirit at rest,[2] whereas our minds will surely be full of restlessness. The voice of conscience, which, after the Resurrection, will become too strong to be ignored by us, will goad us on to purification. In these circumstances we shall be left with no other alternative than to enter into Hell.[3] We shall also realise the agonies which its denizens will have to experience, and their imagination alone will terrify us, but as there will be no other course open to us, we shall be driven towards it,[4] as if we were dumb and blind,[5] and there will be no injustice in it.

The description of Hell given by the Qur-àn often reminds me of a hospital established for the treatment of persons suffering from some most painful diseases. There will naturally be the shrieks and cries, weeping and moaning[6]

[1] And (as for) those who have earned evil, the punishment of an evil is the like of it, and abasement shall come upon them—they shall have none to protect them from Allah—as if their faces had been covered with slices of the dense darkness of night; these are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide. (10: 27).

Darkness shall cover them. (80: 41).

[2] O soul that art at rest! Return to *your* Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants, And enter into My Garden. (89: 27-30).

[3] And when it is said to him, Guard against (the punishment of) Allah, pride carries him off to sin; therefore hell is sufficient for him; and certainly it is an evil resting-place. (2: 206).

Say to those who disbelieve: You shall be vanquished, and driven together to hell; and evil is the resting place. (3: 11).

For those who respond to their Lord is good; and (as for) those who do not respond to Him, had they all that is in the earth and the like thereof with it they would certainly offer it for a ransom. (As for) those, an evil reckoning shall be theirs and their abode is hell, and evil is the resting-place. (13: 18).

[4] The day on which they shall be driven away to the fire of hell with violence. (52: 13).

[5] And whomsoever Allah guides, he is the follower of the right way, and whomsoever He causes to err, *you shall* not find for him guardians besides Him; and We will gather them together on the day of Resurrection on their faces, blind and dumb and deaf; their abode is hell; whenever it becomes allayed We will add to their burning. (17: 97).

He shall say: My Lord! why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one indeed? (20: 125).

[6] So as to those who are unhappy, they shall be in the fire; for them shall be sighing and groaning in it. (11: 106).

And for those who disbelieve in their Lord is the chastisement of hell, and evil is the resort. (67: 6).

When they shall be cast therein, they shall hear a loud moaning of it as it heaves. (67: 7).

of those suffering and these will not die out until the end of the treatment is reached. Besides our affliction, remorse for wrong-doing, would arise from pains analogous to those we feel when we taste some bitter and nauseous medicine. We shall have to drink of a distasteful drink and a very hot one too.[1]

Like those who suffer from a skin disease we shall also need a change of skin if we are to get any relief. We shall have to undergo a sort of surgical operation.[2]

Fire is admittedly the most cleansing of all purifying factors. It is most natural, therefore, that this house of purgatory should be made of burning,[3] purging fire with a pall of smoke over it.[4] It will be fitting that its walls, floor and roof should all be of fire and that sinners be placed on beds of fire also.[5] If sufferers from nerve-troubles or filthy diseases are ordered by their medical advisers to be placed in a steamed room in a Turkish bath, how can we scoff at the idea of Hell and of us being ordered thither by Nature's relentless surgeons,[6] rough in their methods, perhaps, but bound to do as directed? Metals mixed with alloy are usually put in the melting pot, so that dross is burnt off and the substance purified; so also we shall have to undergo a similar process to rid ourselves of physical dross. For this reason *Saqar* is one of the names given to Hell. The

1 Hell is before him and he shall be given to drink of hot water. (14 : 16).
In hot wind and boiling water. (56 : 42).
But boiling and intensely cold water. (78 : 25).

2 (As for) those who disbelieve in Our communications, We shall make them enter fire; so oft as their skins are thoroughly burned. We will change them for other skins, that they may taste the chastisement; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise. (4 : 56).

3 A burning fire. (101 : 11).

4 And the shade of black smoke. (56 : 43).

5 They shall have a bed of the hell-fire and from above them covegsnri of it; and thus do We reward the unjust. (7 : 41).

6 O you who believe! save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones; over it are angels stern and strong, they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded. (66 : 6).

word means anything that changes the nature of other things by melting them. In a wôrd, distress will come to a sinner from every quarter[1] to cleanse him from the evils that surround him from all sides.[2]

The different names given by the Qur-àn to Hell help to explain its nature. *Sá'ir*, *Jahîm* and *Jahannam* mean some thing in the nature of a burning fire, *Laza*[3] explains the nature of its functions meaning anything that stupefies the brain.

But *Hutama*, its sixth name, is very suggestive. It means remorse, a feeling of shame and disgrace, because abasement[4] and intense remorse[5] are some of the chastisements administered to the denizens of Hell which they may in no wise escape.[6] It shows that Hell is a mental torture: that its agonies are agonies of the mind.[7] For, otherwise, why else should our physical body share our troubles if to be nothing but an instrument? The body is a lifeless thing unless it comes under the operation of the mind. It is, as it were, an unconsenting party if it joins with us in our wrong doings. The principle of justice and equity do not punish a party who is forced to give his consent. Moreover, the verse which explains the nature of *Al-Hutamah*[8] decides

1 He will drink it little by little and will not be able to swallow it agreeably, and *distress* will come to him from every quarter, *but* he shall not die; and there shall be vehement chastisement before him. (14: 17).

2 Yea! whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, these are the inmates of the fire: in it they shall abide. (2: 81).

3 By no means! Surely it is a flaming fire. (70: 15).

4 Do they not know that whoever acts in opposition to Allah and His Apostle, he shall surely have the fire of hell to abide in it? That is the grievous abasement. (9: 63).

5 And those who followed shall say: Had there been for us a return, then we would renounce them as they have renounced us. Thus will Allah show them their deeds to be intense regret to them, and they shall not come forth from the fire. (2: 167).

6 Abiding in it; their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be given respite. (2: 162).

7 Which rises above the hearts. (104: 7).

8 And what will make you realize what the crushing disaster is. (104: 5).

the question. Speaking of the fire of Hell the Qur-àn says, that it will come out of our own hearts. Here in this life we are conscious of the same burning of the heart, when a strong desire, unbecoming in its very nature, goads us on to do some wrong. The very idea of shame makes our blood hot and we feel as if we were being driven towards a pit of fire.

The Qur-àn makes mention of some seven gates of Hell meant for different classes of sinners.[1] The doors would lead to seven spiritual evils.

I have already shown that no sooner does our consciousness begin to evolve than we need knowledge of right and wrong, which comes to us either by Revelation or by the requirements of the society in which we live. We find it in its rudimentary form in the Ten Commandments of Moses. They have again been developed into seven principles of good living in the first ten verses of chapter 23 of the Qur-àn, wherein the Book speaks of the birth of human mind. These principles have been given us so as to build the newly formed mind and to make it fit for heavenly life and they are[2]:—

1. Good beliefs.
2. Humility in prayers.
3. Abstention from vanity and levity.
4. Purification as well as almsgiving.
5. Continence or purity in sexual relations.
6. The keeping of trust and covenants.

[1] It has seven gates; for every gate there shall be a separate party of them. (15: 44).

[2] Except those who pray, Those who are constant at their prayer, and those in whose wealth there is a fixed portion, For him who begs and for him who is denied (good), And those who accept the truth of the judgment-day, And those who are fearful of the chastisement of their Lord—Surely the chastisement of their Lord is (a thing) not to be felt secure of—And those who guard their private parts, Except in the case of their wives or those whom their right hands possess—for there surely are not to be blamed, But he who seeks to go beyond the limits—And those who are faithful to their trusts this, these it is that go beyond and their covenant, And those who are upright in their testimonies, And those who keep a guard on their prayer, Those shall be in gardens, honoured. (70: 22-35).

7. Remaining always on our guard against anything contrary to the demands of prayers.

What a wonderful and wise improvement we find here on the Ten Commandments of Moses. It would be sheer folly to call it plagiarism, as certain silly minds among the Christian missionaries generally do, who fail to realise that the Fountain-head of these two sets of injunction is one and the same, the One Lord, Who sends to humanity from time to time that knowledge of which it stands in urgent need. An evolved social law, like that laid down in the Qur-àn, could never have been appreciated by the Israelites of the time of Exodus. Hence the difference. The Qur-àn was given to coming generations when they became advanced in their requirements. This is the true explanation of the coincidences, otherwise Jesus would seem to have committed the worse type of literary larceny, since most of his sayings and parables can be easily traced to Krishna and Buddha.

These seven principles comprise within their scope all that is needed to constitute the best form of society. The violation of even one of them involve a multitude of sins. Thus the whole course of evils becomes narrowed down to the breach of these seven injunctions, which therefore create the seven gates of Hell.[1]

We read, too, of nineteen warden of Hell. Consciousness, according to some psychologists, is only an assemblage of various passions; and I think that to so define the mind is not beside the mark. The whole generation of passions arises from two root-passions—Desire and Anger. These are, in fact, the mother-passions born of the knowledge which we receive from the external world, through our *senses* or through our *food* upon which we live. We have five outer senses which give rise to five inner ones—Hearing, Sight, Smell,

[1] It has seven gates; for every gate there shall be a separate party of them. (15: 44).

Touch and Taste are the former. If any of the ten senses does not perform its functions properly, our knowledge will be defective and this will affect the two mother-passions.

But food has a far-reaching influence, indeed, when it becomes rarified into ideas and creates anger and desire in their best or worst forms. It should not be forgotten that ideation, according to certain modern writers, is also the result of the physical nature nourished by food. Food comes under the action of seven other faculties in the system before it becomes an idea.

1. *Jàzibah.*—This literally means pulling in, drawing or taking in. In the case of food, it would mean eating and drinking.

2. *Màsikah.*—The faculty of retaining food in the system.

3. *Hàzimah.*—The power of digestion.

4. *Dáfi'ah.*—The faculty of getting rid of deleterious matter derived from food.

5. *Ghàziah.*—The faculty of nutrition.

6. *Nàmiah.*—The faculty of growth.

7. *Muwallidah.*—Creative agency.

Food could not perform its function properly if any one of the above metioned seven faculties were out of order. It would naturally give rise to false ideation.

The seven faculties, combined with the ten senses, instantly create these two passions, which, in their turn, branch away into various passions which control all our actions. Thus these nineteen agencies have direct bearing on our morals. If Hell is a place where we are chastened so that we turn from evil to good it will be the work of said agencies to subject us to some sort of treatment to remedy our moral defects.

Hell, as it appears from the Qur-ăn, is only an hospital or purgatory for moral and spiritual cure. How can our mere belief in some intermediary, whether Jesus or another, cure our disease, or act as an antidote in our system?

Again, Heaven is not a delimited area. The Qur-ăn says that it brings all the heavens and the earth within its circumstances.[1] It ought to be so, if it is intended for our minds, because we leave the body here, where we die; and even here the mind when it is free from physical taints, requires a very vast area for its exercise. With the aid of imagination it reaches the corners of the earth. But if we die with a mind which is still fast, and in the snares of our carnal nature, it must gravitate to the earth, seeing that that carnal nature is of the earth. The doors of heaven too must remain closed to us, since earthly things cannot live in those regions. We shall hover between the earth and heaven, and Hell alone can purge us clean of earthly tendencies. How can the suffering of another for us free us of such a burden?

Many men jeer at the very idea of Heaven and Hell. But if science tell us to believe in the continuity of life, we must also admit the possibility of its happy and miserable aspects, which in the Sacred Books have been named Heaven and Hell. Besides, if the principle of causation is another verity and we must reap what we sow, our various actions here would remain unrequited. There must be a day of requital[2] at least for such actions as remain unrecompensed in this life. We may not understand the nature of these future conditions, but our inability to do so does not justify our denial of their existence. Even with all our flight of imagination, we often fail here on the earth to picture an

[1] Hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and to a garden the extensiveness of which is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth; it is prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Apostles; that is the grace of Allah: He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace. (57: 21).

[2] Master of the day of requital. (1: 3).

earthly thing as it really is. It would not be a matter for surprise, therefore, if we fail to appreciate truly the things of the future life, especially when they are of different substance from those on the earth. It may be said that in a sense, the mind and the spirit are the foundations of Heaven and Hell. The Holy Prophet has simply stated a truth when he quotes our Lord in the following words :—

Allah says : I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen and no ear has heard and what the heart of man has not conceived.

The Qur-àn, however, explains to us these verities in their general character. True, it makes mention of many of the delights of Heaven and calls them by names associated with many things here on earth such as milk, honey, musk, and fruits of various kinds. But at the same time it warns us against conceiving of them as in their earthly form. They have been described figuratively and in parables as the Book says which goes on to tell us that God has created for us two Heavens, one here and the other in the hereafter.[1] So it is also in the case of Hell, in order that we may have a foretaste[2] of future conditions, with this difference, that only the heaven and hell of earth are but shadows of the things to come. There is also another difference, which is this that here we find those things in earthly alloyed form.

If the chiding spirit becomes materialized in the strongest possible manner taking the form of Resurrection, as explained above, the other four stages of Spiritual Evolution will become actualized in their best aspects and will take the form of heaven. It is absolutely inconsistent for a doubting mind to laugh at Resurrection or Hell and Heaven because he himself has realized the pangs of conscience here, and is

[1] And besides these two are two (other) gardens. (55 : 62).

[2] And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that they shall have gardens *in* which rivers flow ; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say : This is what was given to us before ; and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them, and in them they shall abide. (2 : 25).

eager for the happiness which even falls here to the lot of such blessed ones as have become free from internal struggles and remains satisfied. No one can avert the toils of life, but such men as I have mentioned keep their minds unruffled under all circumstances being serenely indifferent to pains and pleasures. If such serenity of mind and happiness of soul are things to be coveted, they will come to us in their fullest excellence in Heaven. Its chief characteristics, as given in the Qur-àn, are as follows: In Heaven we shall be free from all troubles and trails [1] and released from every sort of anxiety, fear and grief,[2] we shall listen to no absurd or vain talk,[3] nor shall behold any vanity or levity of character. Doubtless we shall have some sort of food and drink for our nourishment there but these will never be attended with illness or disease.[4] Our good actions have been compared to fruits in Heaven in the Holy Book. Here also we enjoy the fruits of our labour. If our beliefs in truths here are the seeds of all our righteousness, they will be planted there, as well as seeds in our system. Our actions will water them and transform them into a radiant garden. It is for this reason that wherever the Book speaks of beliefs and good actions, it compares them with gardens watered by perennial streams flowing beneath them.[5] Our actions there

1 Who has made us alight in a house abiding for ever out of His grace: toil shall not touch us therein, nor shall fatigue therein afflict us. (35: 35).

2 O My servants! there is no fear for you this day, nor shall you grieve. (43: 68).

3 They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, but only "Peace," and they shall have their sustenance therein morning and evening. (19: 62).

4 They shall not be affected with headache thereby, nor shall they get exhausted. (56: 19).

5 Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heaven *a structure*, and (Who) sends down rain from the cloud then brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits; therefore do not set up rivals to Allah while you know. (2: 22).

And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that they shall have gardens *in* which rivers flow; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say: This is what was given to us before; and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them, and in them they shall abide. (2: 25).

will bring these streams to the surface. The streams may be of a water, the component elements of which are beyond our comprehension, but they are the transformation of our actions in this life. The Arabic word *Jannat* is very significant. It means primarily something hidden. It also means a garden with trees luxuriant in growth. Every piece of land sown with various seeds is a garden in embryo while all the seeds remain hidden. It is *Jannat* in the first meaning of the word. But, when the seeds come up and trees grow, it becomes *Jannat* in the other sense. Even here, those who do not lead dissolute lives and hold themselves aloof from any sort of dissipation, enjoy a form of heavenly life by reason of their good beliefs and righteous actions. The Heaven to come is but the materialization of these beliefs and actions. It is the garden of our own nature, where all our good faculties will grow and bear fruit a hundredfold.

The Muslim Paradise is not, it must be understood, a garden for the voluptuary, where he may sit in the company of maidens under the shade of trees, with goblets of wine circling continually for the enjoyment of the dissipated. We read, it is true, of *Hùr*[1] in the Muslim Paradise. We are told that the women of our family[2] will also be with us in Heaven, purified like ourselves. Some commentators of the Qur-àn take these *Hùrs* to mean our own wives, mothers and sisters, but others regard them as belonging to some heavenly order, where beautiful damsels and boys have been called *Hùr* and *Ghilmàn*. I see no harm in this interpretation.

And We will remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their breasts; the rivers shall flow beneath them and they shall say: All praise is due to Allah Who guided us to this, and we would not have found the way had it not been that Allah had guided us; certainly the apostles of our Lord brought the truth, and it shall be cried out to them that this is the garden of which you are made heirs for what you did. (7: 43).

[1] Thus (shall it be), and We will unite them with pure, beautiful ones. (44: 54).

[2] The Gardens of perpetual abode which they will enter along with those who do good from among their parents and their spouses and their offspring; and the angels will enter in upon them from every gate. (13: 23).

Woman is not a despicable companion to us in our earthly career, though sickly theologians may call them to be the "Gateway of Hell." St. Jerome, St. Cyril, Tertullian and other Christian fathers have made these pious aspersions on those who might have been their better halves, and the like, as they are indeed our better halves. They are our utmost happiness and their company is the choicest of God's blessings. Though when misfortune and ill-luck transfer their affection and love to alien quarters, they make the life a hell. But we are assured that these damsels of heaven will be possessed of a pure and spotless heart,[1] which the very word *Hùr* literally means. Their eyes, fascinating as they may be, will not be the bearers of amorous message. They will in no wise pander to any unworthy feelings. Besides, they will be of no earthly order, nor would they stand in connubial relations to us in the earthly meaning of the word. We shall all be free of physical appetites and there will be no further procreation of the species, which, when all is said and done, is the main object of all matrimonial connections on earth. It may be said that the *Húrs* are not wanted, if they are not to play the rôle of wife as in our earthly sojourn. But those who say so only betray the hollowness of their own minds. Even in this life bed is not the best part of our happiness. All earthly tastes lose their attractions for us when we pass a certain age. Intellectual or spiritual pleasures alone can captivate us for good. Knowledge, and not the flesh, is our real pleasure.

The Qur-àn uses various names to denote the things of the future life. If we take their meanings literally, they all refer to some sort of knowledge, and the place that intervenes between Hell and Heaven also has been called *A'ráf* which means knowledge.

[1] And pure, beautiful ones. (56 : 22).

In short, Heaven is a spiritual experience of the best type whereby all desires will be more than satisfied.[1] Everything will be of an honourable character with no ignoble feature of any kind. The Qur-àn suggests this idea in the clearest terms when it gives us the list of those who are entitled to enter into the heavenly abode. Their very characters show that it would not be a place for licentiousness. Here are some of them :—

1. Those who hold good beliefs and translate them into actions.

2. Those who lead a pious life or have come under the forgiveness of the Compassionate Lord.

3. Those who possess humility of mind and are penitent in heart and whose minds have become purified of all alloy.

4. Those who on earth kept their promises and fulfilled their covenants.

5. Those who are righteous and not only remain in prayer, but translate the demands of their prayers into actions.

6. Those who have become cleansed of all their wrong desires and whose hearts are pure of every error.

In short, good deeds of all kinds—piety, righteousness, patience, chastity, charity, almsgiving, regard for bounds, truthfulness, abstention from absurdity and vanity, giving good advice to others are the chief qualities of those who will

[1] O My servants! there is no fear for you this day, nor shall you grieve. (43 : 68).

Those who believed in Our communications and were submissive : (43 : 69).

Enter the garden, you and your *wives* ; you shall be made happy. (43 : 70).

There shall be sent round to them golden bowls and drinking-cups, and therein shall be what their souls yearn after and (wherein) the eyes shall delight, and you shall abide therein. (43 : 71).

And this is the garden which you are given as an inheritance on account of what you did. (43 : 72).

For you therein are many fruits of which you shall eat. (43 : 73).

Surely the guilty shall abide in the chastisement of hell. (43 : 74).

enter into the Paradise of the Lord. Again, it has been repeatedly shown that peace will reign supreme there so much so that Heaven has also been named, *Dàr-es-Salám*, the House of Peace. All our highest capabilities which have remained latent here, will come to full fruition there. For this reason Heaven has been also named *Dár-en-Na'ìm*, the House of good gifts.

In this connection, I will narrate here some of the evil things which, according to the Qur-àn, will carry men to Hell: Guilt, injustice, pride, niggardliness, ungratefulness, rebellion, inordinacy, doubts as to truths, transgressions of limits, the forbidding of good deeds, want of good deeds, disbelief, opposition to God, polytheism.

The above mentioned virtues and vices clearly explain the nature of Heaven and Hell. They exclude all idea of earthly things. All of them appertain to things mental or spiritual. The Qur-àn, therefore, makes a lucid but true statement of the coming reality. It says that we come here with the highest capabilities, but at the beginning start at the lowest rung of the ladder. We have to work out our own advancement and reach, as best as we can, the highest stage of our growth. We are on an evolutionary journey and we have been given every kind of guidance to carry us to our destination. We come on the earth to prepare ourselves for future progress. If we can develop our faculties to such an extent as will enable us to enter into a life of future progress, we leave the life of this world successful. But if we cannot do so, we shall have first to become cleansed of our impurities which have stuck to us in our sojourn on earth, and when we are purged thereof we shall begin our journey and ultimately reach the place wherefrom we came at first. We came from Light and to Light shall we ascend.

The Holy Qur-àn, when speaking of Heaven, says that it is like the heavens and the earth in its vastness. When the Holy Prophet was speaking about this verse to his companions there chanced to be present an Ambassador from the Roman Emperor Heraclius, who observed that if Heaven were so extensive, it would hardly leave any room for Hell—a remark very much to the point. But the reply was more than equal to it. "God be glorified," said the Holy Prophet, "where is the night when the day comes?" This may not be appreciated by those who imagine the universe to be a three-storeyed house, with our earth as the middle one. But the Qur-ànic verse and the Holy Prophet's comment thereon explains the whole thing on a scientific basis. It is the earthly matter in us which gravitates us towards the planet. The moment we lose such matter we depart from it, as indeed we find in the case of birds. If death consists in the separation of the spirit from the body, the former cannot remain attached to the earth without its physical clothing. But since low passions are a rarefied form of earthly matter, the spirit, if filled with such passions, cannot go beyond certain regions in the adjoining space, and, like a toy balloon filled with gas, cannot ascend beyond a certain height. As long as there are earthly passions in us, we shall have to remain hovering in a place called Hell. The doors of Heaven will be opened to us only when we are purged of all carnal desires. We may have any substance for our body, it will be much lighter than the clay out of which we are now fashioned. That body, indeed, may be of electrons or of light itself, as we read in the Qur-àn. Supposing we could visualise a species of balloon, made of electrical matter with a man sitting in it whose body itself was made of the same substance with various devices for eating and drinking, but all of the same substance, it would be an easy matter for the person in the balloon to move throughout the whole space of the universe

with electric rapidity. A similar description has been given by the Holy Prophet of our movements in the Heaven.

As to the pleasures of Heaven, we may enjoy them in the same way as we enjoy our pleasures on earth. But since our various organs, our tastes, digestion and the rest, will not be the product of earth, the things for our enjoyment in Heaven cannot be of earthly nature. I am neither exaggerating nor inventing when I say that I have known Muslim gentlemen of rare piety who at times used to enjoy the delicious flavour and taste of several fruits without actually eating any. Men of that character sometimes hear the loveliest music, the most bewitching songs when none actually is being played. I know of another friend, who once had a novel experience. He was neither dreaming nor in a trance, but he was quite wide-awake sitting meditating at midnight. He felt as if he was in the company of a woman and appreciated her company. The Qur-án has also referred to this when it says that the inmates of heaven when given a portion of the fruit thereof shall say: "This is what was given to us before: they shall *be given the like of it.*" The italicised words most eloquently explain that the pleasures of Heaven will be like those we enjoy here, but not of the same nature. There is another similar statement in Chapter 76 which tells of the various pleasures which we shall enjoy in Heaven. Now, for example, camphor is the best of antiseptics, and the Book, after mentioning the condition of the sinners in Hell, speaks of the righteous who drink of a cup the admixture of which is camphor." After a patient's bowels have been thoroughly purged he needs an antiseptic because he has still germs of putrefaction in his system. After he is fully relieved he requires a tonic. Ginger, they say, is one of the finest invigorating medicines; so we read in the same chapter that the inmates of Heaven will be given to drink "a cup the

admixture of which shall be of ginger." [1]

We need nourishment wherever we may be, and if we perceive the nourishing value of those fruits, the namesakes of which will be given us in Heaven. It shows that they are invigorating and stimulating especially in cases of heart weakness. If the heart is the seat of the mind then it must have in the heavenly regions similar food like that which is beneficial to it on earth.

The Holy Qur-án thus also explains many other aspects of this subject, nourishment in Heaven and Hell being one of them. Everything is to be nourished, but its nourishment is derived from the same substance as that which gives it its body. If, on our death, we have to leave our bodies behind us, then we cannot naturally assimilate anything of the earth by way of nutrition. But since the mind of the sinner, at his resurrection, will long for earthly things, these hankerings will of themselves place him in torment on account of their absence in those regions. He will feel that he is forbidden the very things which he used to enjoy on earth. On the other hand, he will be interested in the heavenly food, because he will find some of his friends there enjoying it. If he asks them to share their delicacies with him, and if they refuse, it will be all too natural. The verse further explains the stuff of which the food will be prepared. It will be light. Our bodies will be made of light, for otherwise we would not be able to assimilate any articles made of light. This takes us a step further. Charcoal has within it various gems of light, and a stage comes when every piece of coal becomes all light. But before reaching that brilliant state, every particle of soot and smoke must be consumed. It must also go through fire to get the brilliance which is innate in it. It is just the same with us. We come fully from light, as I have explained

[1] And they shall be made to drink therein a cup the admixture of which shall be ginger. (76 : 17).

elsewhere. That light became denser and denser until, eventually, it assumed the form of the earth which brought forth man as its best product. From this condition we enter upon a sort of backward journey for we have to return to the same condition of light, so it is not surprising if a case-hardened mind, full of metaphorical soot and smoke, is thrown into a pit of fire. But he must live on something and that something is, as the Qur-án says, the fruit of a tree called *Zaqqum.*

The tree of *Zaqqum* [1] has been mentioned in the Qur-án as growing at the bottom of Hell. Its fruit, it is said, will be the food of the sinful. It will boil in their bellies. They will be thirsty and run for water and they will be given boiling water to drink. The very description shows that the fruit would act as an aperient medicine. A Muslim divine, who was also an experienced physician, treated a syphilitic patient with a fruit of the same name which grows in India. The patient felt hot and the physician gave him hot water which caused a violent evacuation of the bowels. Motion after motion came bringing out black deleterious matter from his stomach, and the patient was relieved. The Holy Qur-àn suggested the idea to the physician, and he used to apply it in all serious cases. I read of another similarity between hospital and Hell as given in the Qur-àn. When a patient is admitted into a hospital he is often accompanied by his friends; but if he is under treatment for some very serious disease, no visitor is allowed to see him. A sort of a wall, a barrier, as it were, is placed between him and those who are in good health. He does not see them again unless and until he is fully cured. His friends may come to enquire after him, but they are not allowed to see him. So we read in the Qur-àn, when it speaks of a wall raised between the

[1] Surely it is a tree that grows in the bottom of the hell; (7 : 64).

hypocrite and the believer,[1] separating the two each from the other. The Holy Book speaks also about the duration of Heaven and Hell. Heaven, it says, is an everlasting gift that will never be cut off.[2] It establishes the eternity of Heaven, but, as Hell is only a purifying entity; it cannot exist if there are no impurities of wrong inclinations to be got rid of. It must exist as long as the two things exist; because no one can enter Heaven unless he has a pure spirit. These impurities are no other than the earthly passions in us which, in their uncontrolled condition, are the cause of wrong-doing during our earthly sojourn. We may not have any occasion to do more sins after our death for lack of means, but the inclination to do so will subsist in us as long as these passions survive. They are a kind of barrier between the sinner and the heavenly abode, which, indirectly, give rise to Hell. If we commit sin, it is on account of these inclinations which emanate therefrom; and if we continue to feel the said inclination after death, it is for the same reason. These passions, in their uncleansed form, even after death, must tend towards earth for their satisfaction. They will exist as long as the earth exists, and will create a hankering in us to return to the terrestrial sphere, but we shall not be able to gratify them for want of a physical body,—the necessary wherewithal of earthly life,—for the body is left behind on our death and reduced to its elements. This inability will act as a second barrier between our inclinations and the means to satisfy them.[3] A sinner will thus have two barriers, one

[1] On the day when the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women will say to those who believe: Wait for us, that we may have light from your light; it shall be said: Turn back and seek a light. The separation would be brought about between them, with a wall having a door in it; (as for) the inside of it, there shall be mercy in it, and (as for) the outside of it before it there shall be chastisement. (57: 13).

[2] And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as *your* Lord please: a gift which shall never be cut off. (11: 108).

[3] And a barrier shall be placed between them and *that* which they desire, as was done with the likes of them before; surely they are in a disquieting doubt. (34: 54).

before him and the other behind him. The struggle between the tendency and the inability to satisfy it will surely create a new hell for a sinner, which must co-exist with the earth, and would naturally come to an end if our planet were to be destroyed. We read in the Qur-àn of a calamity which will be the end of the earth. The Book speaks of some terrible concussion that will shatter it to pieces, and make the mountains, which were created to keep the earth steady, like unto loosened wool [1] with the men on it scattered like moths in space. The calamity will be in the nature of a collision of the earth with some larger heavenly body, as science also says when discussing the possible fate of our planet. If Hell be co-existent with the earth, it must disappear with it. But we read of a third thing co-existing with Hell. The Book, when speaking of sinners in Hell, says, they will abide therein so long as the heaven and the earth endure. This statement, however, makes no difference to my point of view. The Arabic words, *Ard* and *Samàwàt*, which correspond to the English words the *earth* and the *heavens* respectively, do not literally mean the earth and the heavens. Their primary meaning refer rather to the position they occupy in space than to the substance of which they are made. *Ard* in Arabic means anything that stands below another thing, while *Samà* means height. The two words are thus relative, so much so that the first of the seven heavens may be called *Ard* of the second heaven. Similarly the second may be termed *Ard* in relation to the third. It shows that though the regions, here called *Samàwàt*, of the heavens may survive the extinction of the earth, yet they will not be called by their present names. If the demolition of the earth will make an end of Hell the word *Samàwàt* will no longer be applied to the regions now so called. There is, however, another word in the verse under discussion which gives rise to a misconception as to the

[1] And the mountains shall be as loosened wool. (101 : 5).

duration of Hell, and that word is *Abad*, which has been wrongly interpreted as *eternity*. But *abad* has *ábàd* as its plural, while the idea of eternity cannot admit of plurality. Eternity is one indivisible thing. Therefore, the word *Abad* only means a very long period. The existence of Hell cannot be ascribed to any Divine revenge or to the passion of an "angered deity." The Qur-án absolutely denies any such reason. It says that God is not interested in any way in punishing us.[1] But as we have not used His gifts aright, and therefore remain unfit for further progress, we are sent to Hell for the removal of all that retards our progress in the coming life.

[1] *Why* should Allah *chastise you* if you are grateful and believe? And Allah is the Multiplier of rewards, Knowing. (4 : 147).